



Volume 5, Issue 4

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
Sunne Wright McPeak, Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
Tony V. Harris, Acting Director

APRIL 2004

Caltrans Makes Strong Showing for Excellence in Transportation Awards

The 18th annual Excellence in Transportation Awards were announced in March with winners ranging from extensions of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District and improvements to the State Highway System to "green" projects that will help make California a better place to live.

Caltrans District 4 (Oakland) took nine individual awards, while D11 (San Diego) won three. Six districts -- D1 (Eureka), D2 (Redding), D3 (Marysville), D5 (San Luis Obispo), D7 (Los Angeles), and D8 (San Bernardino) -- garnered one each. The HQ Office of Audio/Visual Communications also took home an award.

Non-departmental winners included environmental organizations, railroads, park and recreation entities, cities and numerous county agencies from across the state.

"Transportation excellence and innovation, as showcased in these winning projects, not only enhance our highway traveling experience," said Acting Director Tony V. Harris, "but improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods, community and environment."

The competition salutes agencies that are dedicated to solving the state's transportation challenges. Caltrans received more than 100 entries from state and local government, design firms and contractors. Winners were picked by a panel representing transportation, environmental, engineering and community interests.

Winning entries, by category, are:

Intermodal Transportation

- The BART to SFO extension added 8.7 miles (and three new stations) to the Bay Area Regional Transit system in San Mateo County -- from the previously existing Colma Station to the San Francisco International Airport.

- District 8 (San Bernardino) shared honors with the Riverside County Transportation Commission and the City of Corona



Caltrans Television Specialist Gary Pund prepares a shot of Ronnie Little, an actor in "Life Sentence." The video helps drivers understand dangers associated with railroad barriers. It won a first place commendation in the Excellence in Transportation Awards. Photo by Lynn G. Harrison HQ Photography.

Development Agency for the Metrolink North Corona Station Project near State Highway 91 and Main Street in Corona.

The station is a combined Park & Ride facility, transit stop, and transfer location for Metrolink passengers riding between Riverside County and Los Angeles, Orange and San Bernardino counties.

Rural Highways

- District 5 (San Luis Obispo) worked with other agencies to complete the Cuesta Grade, a section of Highway 101 that climbs over Cuesta

Pass, five miles north of SLO. The grade rises nearly 1,000 feet on a 7 percent slope, and forms a vital link in the state's primary coastal route. Other participants were the SLO Council of Governments, Modern Continental/Roadway A Joint Venture, and the California Highway Patrol.

- District 1 (Eureka) improved safety and minimized the environmental impact of the realignment of State Highway 101 just south of Crescent City in Del Norte County. The District used careful, cooperative planning to reduce the loss of old-growth redwood trees in the Cushing Creek Project, and it integrated safety measures that cut the collision rate in the area by 600 percent. The \$15 million final cost compared favorably to the original estimate of up to \$40 million. The Department's partners included the Sierra Club, Save the Redwood League and the Redwood National and State Parks.

Urban Highways

- District 4 (Oakland) won for the State Highway 84 Bayfront Expressway project in the southern San Francisco Peninsula. It widened the roadway from four to six lanes from University Avenue to the Highways 84/101 Interchange, and added standard shoulders from University Avenue to the Dumbarton Bridge. The project won praise for using lightweight fill as a road base over

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Safety Is Caltrans' Most Important Job



Acting Director Tony V. Harris

The Department will honor District 5 Maintenance Lead Worker Michael Feliciano on April 8 as part of the Caltrans Highway Workers Memorial. This annual event will be held on the west steps of the Capitol in coordination with National Work Zone Safety Week (April 5-11).

On February 25, Mr. Feliciano and another crewmember were returning to the maintenance yard from an emergency lane closure on Highway 101 when another driver hit their Caltrans vehicle and killed Mr. Feliciano. A co-worker, Tharon Franklin, was also in the Caltrans truck and fortunately survived with some injuries.

He was the 159th Department employee to die on the job since 1924. For each of us, losing a fellow worker strikes very close to home. Many knew Michael personally. And we all understand the dangers that highway workers face on a daily basis.

Still, we have reason to hope. Caltrans has been working hard to en-

sure that highway workers are better protected and that California's drivers are more aware of the perils that our employees face in building, operating and maintaining our transportation system. And most importantly, Department employees continuously work to maintain and improve safety practices and procedures.

We can be thankful that the number of work-related deaths are declining. In fact, the Department went almost three years without a death on the job. That shows we are making real progress, but the fact remains that even one death is one too many. When it comes to the issue of safety, we always have "more work to do." And we cannot rest in our efforts until job-related deaths become only a dim memory in the past.

It's important to remember that Michael Feliciano and the other 158 men and women who have died are more than just statistics and names attached to a plaque. They are real people, with friends and families who expected them to return home at the end of the day.

This issue of the CT News covers important advances the Department has made in improving its safety record: the annual "Slow for the Cone Zone" campaign and the Portable Work Zone Barrier, nicknamed the "Balsi Beam."

In recent years the Department has initiated the prize-winning "Slow for the Cone Zone," which urges drivers to be aware of workers in construction and maintenance zones, and to slow down accordingly. Surveys of people who have seen or heard "Cone Zone" advertising indicate that drivers have gotten the message.

Still, public relations are only part of the solution. Impaired drivers are still capable of hitting workers along

the highway. And that's where the Balsi Beam can help.

Three years ago, a car drifted into a work zone on Interstate 280 in Santa Clara and ultimately struck Landscape Worker Mark Balsi. Although the work crew had followed all prescribed safety procedures, Balsi lost his leg and suffered a broken shoulder, ring finger and cranium.

That kind of accident is less like to happen today because of the new work zone barrier, which places a "shield of steel" around highway workers. The specialized tractor-trailer uses high-strength steel beams that can form a perimeter of up to 30 feet to keep errant vehicles out of the work zone.

The Balsi Beam has worked well in preliminary tests and currently is being used in District 4. The Department expects to use it in other areas across the state.

This time of year, as we prepare for the annual Workers Memorial, we need to focus on and renew our sense of purpose. We all need to remember that safety is Caltrans' most important job.

We all know that our work can be dangerous. For that reason, we must remain focused. It is critical that we never forget our commitment, either as an organization or as individuals. We must continue to look for new ways to improve safety, to always keep our employees and those using our transportation system safe from harm.



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Public Affairs Office
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Excellence*continued from page 1*

bay mud, for its landscaping on a bike/walking path, and for the Ravenswood Triangle wetland mitigation area.

- The Highway 101 Widening Project provided congestion relief to south Bay commuters with the addition of two new lanes in either direction along a stretch between Bernal Road (in San Jose) and Cochrane Road (in Morgan Hill) in Santa Clara County. Funded through the state and the local Measure B Transportation Improvement Program, the project added a mixed flow lane and carpool lane in each direction. It was a partnership between District 4, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, County of Santa Clara and RGW Construction, Inc.

Major Structures

- The City of Fresno led a team that constructed the Shaw/Marks Grade Separations, creating underpasses for two avenues along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks. Both train and vehicle traffic continued moving during the entire project. For example, Shaw Avenue continued to handle some 59,000 vehicles a day during the entire 3 1/2-year project. At the same time, 45 freight and passenger trains a day continued to travel through the city during the process.

- In the growing southern part of the San Francisco Bay, District 4 widened the trestle section of the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge from four to six lanes and provided shoulders in both directions. The 5.2-mile trestle, resting just four feet north of the older structure, increased traffic capacity by 50 percent. It substantially reduced traffic delays during commute hours, provided a safe refuge area for disabled vehicles and increased the overall effectiveness of one of the major bay crossings.

The Environment

- While completing the New Benicia-Martinez Bridge, District 4 pioneered a tool that would protect marine life from the sound and pressure of pile driving. Fish kills, attributed to the pile driving, threatened to shut down the project. However, the Caltrans-developed Air Bubble Curtain cut sound levels by 30 decibels and pressure waves by 99 percent -- and saved the Department up to \$1 million in potential lost time. The device, which was developed within a matter of weeks, provides Caltrans and the rest of the world with an environmentally responsible method of reducing the effects of underwater pile driving.



District 11 won an Excellence in Transportation Award for moving the H. Lee House, a 1920s-era historic structure that had stood in the path of the new State Highway 125, which opened to traffic last year.

Transportation Related Facilities

- District 4 worked with other stakeholders to upgrade the H. Dana Bowers Roadside Rest Area, located on the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge. Better known as the Vista Point, the rest area plays host to some 2.5 million visitors a year. Improvements included construction of the Lone Sailor Memorial and a traffic management facility, creation of a bicycle corridor and upgrade of a comfort station. Partners included the National Park Service; Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation Department; and the Lone Sailor Memorial Committee.

- Thanks to District 4 and its partners, commuters and recreational users can now enjoy the Berkeley Bay Trail along one of the region's most heavily used urban highways. The trail provides a scenic, convenient route in the East Bay for commuter and recreation bicycle users, joggers and walkers, along the two-mile section of the San Francisco Bay Trail. In addition to its natural beauty, the trail offers immediate proximity to a variety of transit modes, including AC Transit, Amtrak and BART. Caltrans worked in cooperation with Bauman Landscape; Citizens for an East Shore State Park; and the City of Berkeley's Department of Parks, Recreation and Waterfront.

System Operations

- Using cutting-edge, Web-based technology, District 4 created the Bay Area Incident Response System (BAIRS), which lets the Department locate, respond to and clear traffic incidents more quickly. Caltrans statistics show that for every minute a freeway lane is blocked, traffic is delayed four to 10 minutes, which in turn is multiplied by the average four hours needed to clear the problem. BAIRS uses Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to locate the nearest maintenance crews to respond to a specific incident. The new system has generated interest from other districts and could lead to statewide application of the innovative traffic management solution.

Safety

- Concerned about public safety on State Highway 160 in the San Joaquin Delta, District 3 (Marysville) worked to install a guardrail that provided security and allowed access to the Sacramento River for recreation, farming and irrigation purposes. Since the highway was on a levee, widening the roadway was not an option. A metal beam guardrail provided protection against vehicles leaving the road, as well as recreational and commercial access to the river.

Excellence*continued on page 4*

Excellence*continued from page 3*

- The Headquarters Office of Audio/Visual Communications Video Production Unit with the help of District 7, District 4 and HQ Information Technology, created the award-winning video "Life Sentence." Produced for only \$5,000, Life Sentence is being used in high schools across the nation to educate and warn drivers (especially teens) of the potential physical, emotional and life-long consequences of circumventing railroad barriers.

Life Sentence, which involves a moving train, car wreck, and courtroom scene, features local actors and Caltrans employees, and was taped live as a real-time rescue operation. It was also used as a training tool for emergency and law enforcement personnel.

The video was produced in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration, Operation Lifesaver, The California State Railroad Museum, California State Parks, local fire, law and emergency personnel, and the legal firm Rothschild, Wishek and Sands.

Life Sentence can be seen on the web at:

<http://svhqwinmedia1/training/HQVIDEO/LifeSentence.asf>

Historic Preservation/Cultural Enhancement

- District 11 (San Diego) relocated the historic H. Lee House of Lemon Grove after the District determined that the 1920s-era home would be affected by construction of Highway 125. Built and occupied in 1928 by automobile business owner H. Lee, the house was designed by architect Frederic C. Clemshaw. It was relocated about two blocks away, now sits adjacent to the historic Parsonage Museum, and is used for civic and educational purposes. The highway opened in May 2003. Caltrans' partners in the \$2 million project included the Federal Highways Administration, City of Lemon Grove and the San Diego Association of Governments.

Maintenance

- Working with the California Department of Conservation, District 4 installed 50 tons of recycled glass for mulch and ground cover at the State Highway 101/Lawrence Expressway Interchange in Sunnyvale. The material, called "cullet," would otherwise have been dumped into a landfill since it did not meet glass bottle recycling standards. The jewel and earth tone colored glass provides a new landscaping option, which will not decompose like wood and reduces the Department's need for herbicides.

Context Sensitive Solutions

- The Alameda County Public Works Agency was faced with calming traffic along Fairview Avenue in Hayward. The public was concerned that any project address the questions of increased traffic, safety for walking, biking and equestrian activities, and maintain a historically rural environment. The answer was a series of roundabouts and roadway widenings to provide a continuous pathway, on which the California Highway Patrol could monitor speeds.

- In 1995, District 11 was faced with the challenge of seismically retrofitting the San Diego-Coronado Bridge while protecting Chicano Park and residents below the span. The park, completed in the early 1970s, is an integral part of the community. Staff met with members of the San Diego City Council, Board of Supervisors, State Assembly, Senate and the public. The meetings resulted in upgraded landscaping, lighting, bathrooms, sports equipment and athletic courts. The Department also donated scaffolding to allow the community to continue the upkeep of an ongoing mural effort in the park.

Innovation

- The Caltrans Integrated Management Program calls for an 80 percent reduction in chemical use by 2012. District 2 (Redding) found an answer in the CRMcrete Weed Barrier, which successfully controls weeds without the use of herbicides or exposing workers to needless danger. The device uses a variety of elements to control weeds. They include scrap tire crumb rubber in weed-resistant mulch, which helps reduce the number of tires that go to state landfills.

Public Awareness

- District 11 put together an impressive campaign to provide information to the public concerning the impacts of the Interstate 5/805 "Merge" Widening Project. The District's message focused on safety during construction of the \$182 million project to widen the county's largest interchange. The campaign included a logo, Web page, telephone hot line, public events, news releases and media advertising, and serves as an example for other Districts with similar concerns.

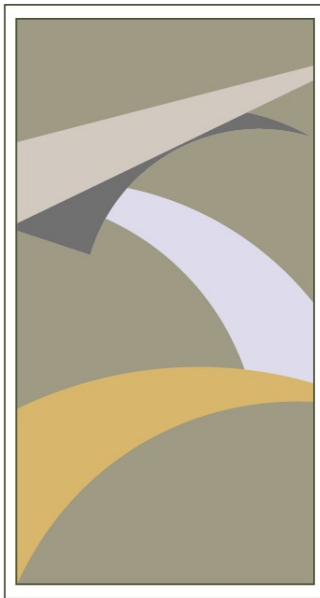
Judges' Special Recognition (Partnering)

- District 4 Maintenance Crew 711, Seminary Landscape, regularly turns over its Acacia tree clippings from Highway 580 in Oakland and San Leandro to Oakland's Oak Knoll Zoo. The trimmings help to augment the diets of several animals in the menagerie, including bison, camels, zebras and elephants. The ongoing practice helps both Caltrans and the zoo -- providing the Department with a low-cost alternative to landfills and offering

the zoo an inexpensive dietary supplement for its inhabitants.

Judges' Special Recognition (Technological Solutions)

- The Intermodal and Jurisdictional Integrated Network Environment (IMJINE) Project is a \$3 million effort on the 13-mile Interstate 105 (Glenn Anderson Freeway), along with Firestone Boulevard, Imperial Highway and Rosecrans Avenue. It integrates Intelligent Transportation Systems to promote efficiency in public transportation. It helps to coordinate traffic signals on major arteries by integrating city, county and state transportation management centers. It gives transit vehicles priority on the I-105 corridor and it improves efficiency of paratransit services and schedules.



Balsi Beam Provides a 'Shield of Steel' for Highway Workers

More than three years ago a car operated by an impaired driver drifted into the wrong lane along southbound Interstate 280 near the Page Mill Road exit in Santa Clara County, ultimately severing Caltrans Landscape Worker Mark Balsi's leg.

The next thing Balsi remembered was waking up in Stanford University Hospital.

He lost part of his left leg, suffered a broken shoulder and ring finger, and was treated for a split cranium. Another worker, Loretta "Lorie" Garley, was treated for lesser injuries and released.

In the process of 10 operations, doctors amputated portions of the already severed leg, and eventually fitted Balsi with a prosthetic limb. He now works at the District 4 Transportation Management Center.

The accident occurred even though Caltrans had followed all prescribed safety procedures as they worked along the highway clearing brush and cutting trees along with another group from the California Conservation Corps.

However, Caltrans has recently developed and has been testing a device, formally called the Portable Work Zone Barrier, but nicknamed the "Balsi beam." It provides additional protection around highway work crews and could go a long way toward preventing similar accidents in the future.

"Protecting our workers and the traveling public is our highest priority," said Randell Iwasaki, the Caltrans Deputy Director of Maintenance and Operations. "The accident involving Mark Balsi underscored the need for additional protection from vehicles that could penetrate the work area."

The answer to the problem is a specialized tractor-trailer. Either side of the trailer is made up of high-strength steel beams that are capable of "telescoping" for an extra 15 feet. By using hydraulic power, each beam can be rotated to form a custom-

made perimeter of up of 30 feet -- a secure work zone.

An errant automobile is more likely to be deflected from this rigid "shield of steel" and, consequently, away from highway workers.

"In a typical work zone, trucks are placed in the front and back of a work zone, but there is no protection for workers from adjacent traffic lanes," said Iwasaki. "This system lengthens the area where workers can be protected."

The new safety system has "performed exceptionally well in testing," according to

Cal Shiefferly, Senior Equipment Engineer of the Division of Equipment. "We're very satisfied with the results."

Balsi has seen the piece of equipment that now carries his name, and applauds its deployment -- "as long as it's used," he said. "If I'd been inside (of the extended beams), I think the car would have just bounced off."

But, he adds, drivers also need to take responsibility for workers' safety. "People out there just need to be aware that when they see (caution) signs, people are working nearby. They just need to be aware."

The Balsi beam is now being used in District 4, and plans call for it to be deployed elsewhere in the state. A patent is pending.

For additional information on the Portable Work Zone Barrier, contact Kris Teague, in the Division of Equipment, (916) 227-9608.



The Portable Work Zone Barrier, which is better known as the Balsi Beam, is designed to provide better protection to Caltrans highway employees, who are faced with the daily hazards of working on our roads.

District 8 Workers Help Save Mountain Area Motorist

By Ivy Estrada

District 8 Public Affairs

Gerald Loeb, a retired resident of Sugar Loaf, recently wrote D-8 Director Anne Mayer about four Caltrans Maintenance workers' selfless efforts to assist a woman in an overturned vehicle on Highway 38 near Onyx Summit in the San Bernardino Mountains.

On Jan. 20, Loeb was driving home from San Bernardino, trailing a sports utility vehicle. Snow was beginning to fall, and Loeb noticed the vehicle, driven by a

woman, hit a slippery patch of roadway, spin off the highway, and land on its side -- leaving it precariously perched against a small tree on the mountain slope.

Loeb stopped immediately, and he and a passenger ran to help. With its engine still running and tires spinning, the SUV was slipping slowly down the cliff -- its driver trapped helplessly inside. Worst of all, the steep mountain slope kept Loeb from reaching the driver. It was, to say the least, a dangerous situation.

After failing repeatedly to reach 911

(since there was no cell phone service in the area), Loeb began stopping cars. The situation was grim. At 8,500 feet, the mountainside was cold. Snow continued to fall. And the men could only wave encouragement to the woman.

Fortunately, Henry Harden, a Caltrans maintenance equipment operator who had been repairing guide markers along Highway 38, happened on the scene in his Caltrans crew truck. Loeb explained the

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Caltrans Highway Workers Memorial Remembers District 5's Michael Feliciano



Michael Feliciano

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will observe Workers Memorial Day on April 8 by remembering Michael Feliciano, a 55-year-old District 5 Maintenance Lead Worker, who was killed Feb. 25 by an errant driver.

His death, on Highway 101 near Chualar in Monterey County, brings to 159 the number of Caltrans workers who have died in the line of duty since 1924 -- most of them struck by reckless or inattentive drivers.

The accident occurred just after the Salinas maintenance crew had set up a closure for a flooded lane. Feliciano and his co-worker, Tharon Franklin, were in a Caltrans truck and heading back to a maintenance yard. A vehicle traveling southbound crossed the median and collided with the Caltrans truck, fatally injuring Feliciano. Franklin suffered minor injuries, but was released from the hospital later that evening.

Each year Caltrans honors its fallen workers and remembers their lives at the annual Memorial Service in Sacramento. In addition to the memorial for Feliciano, the 11 a.m. ceremony on the West Capitol Steps will salute all employees who have died over the last 80 years while serving the people of California.

"Working on California's transportation system should not be a life and death situation," said Acting Caltrans Director Tony V. Harris. "We can all help improve safety for our highway workers by easing up on the gas pedal while in the 'cone zone'."

The memorial will feature 159 orange cones, shaped into a caution sign and placed near the Capitol steps. Each cone bears the name of a fallen worker. The Caltrans Honor Guard will conduct a ceremony around the memorial cone zone to honor those who have paid the ultimate price while on the job.

It has been more than 50 years since the Department worked for three consecutive years without having an employee killed on the job. This year the Department fell short of the three-year threshold by 23 days.

The Caltrans service coincides with the National Work Zone Safety Week that is being observed nationwide April 5 - 9.



Shirley Pereira of District 3 takes a moment for silent reflection during last year's Workers Memorial in Capitol Park. Photo by Ed Andersen HQ Photography.

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situation, and Harden immediately radioed his supervisor and the Traffic Management Center for emergency assistance.

Within moments, a Caltrans snowplow arrived, driven by Keith Laub, another maintenance equipment operator who had been summoned by a motorist just as he received the radio alert.

Using a chain from Laub's vehicle, the men worked to secure the SUV. They attached one end to the snowplow, while Laub carried the other as he climbed carefully down the mountainside. Hooking the chain around the front axle of the overturned vehicle, he stabilized the vehicle and then climbed back to the road.

Soon after that, two other Caltrans employees arrived: Jon Bevan, Fawnskin Maintenance Supervisor, and Steve Carroll, an equipment operator. They soon connected another chain between the SUV and a plow truck. Loeb watched while the two chains were drawn into a taut "V."

In a delicate balancing act, one worker directed the Caltrans vehicles to pull the chains tightly enough to hold the SUV, yet allow the vehicle to remain resting on the small tree. It was an expert job. Too much tension on the chains would have pulled the vehicle off the tree and caused it to plunge to the bottom of the canyon.

With the vehicle secured and rescue teams on the way, everyone relaxed a little. The woman appeared stable, alert and relieved.

But snow continued to fall. Bevan turned his attention to directing traffic, and allowing emergency vehicles access to the victim. He instructed his crew to place fuses to mark off the area and to apply cinders to give vehicles more traction on the roadway. His crew ran a traffic flagging operation.

Using the one available traffic lane, emergency paramedics soon arrived, followed by a San Bernardino County Sheriff's unit, two highway patrol cars, a fire truck and a tow truck. Fire Department personnel pried the door open and carried the driver to safety. She was taken to a nearby hospital for evaluation and released the same day.

Asked what he was thinking during the

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'Hats Off' to Caltrans Employees

On a regular basis, Caltrans employees receive appreciation letters by external customers for outstanding performance. "Hats Off" features some of these well-deserved accolades earned by employees throughout the Department. Keep up the good work! (Editor's note: Letters can be submitted to Robin Witt for possible publishing. Letters may be edited for length and continuity.)

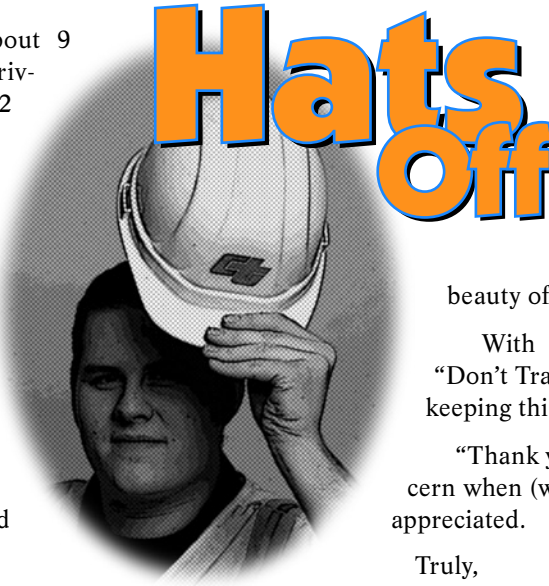
On March 3, 2004, at about 9 a.m., my wife and I were driving westbound on Highway 92 near the turnoff to southbound Highway 101 and had come to a stop in heavy traffic when we were rear-ended by another car and were pretty dazed by the unexpected impact. Immediately, two men appeared beside our car, opened the doors, looked us over, asked how we were and ordered us to stay still. They also told us they had seen the whole incident unfold and had already called for help.

These two men were Caltrans employees. They then maneuvered their big truck behind our car to protect us and kept a close eye on us until more help arrived. Fire fighters and paramedics soon showed up and the CHP took over control of the scene. But, make no mistake about this, it was the calm, reassuring and take charge demeanor of these two Caltrans employees that helped us cope with what was happening and they need to know how much their help was appreciated.

Mr. Shakir Carminer and Mr. Kevin Smith did not have to do what they did. Nonetheless, they did and, moreover, did so not only in a professional way but also in a warm and caring way that we shall not soon forget. I can well imagine that the general public takes Caltrans for granted but Mrs. Ames and I now have a much different view.

Please extend our genuine thanks and appreciation to Mr. Carminer and Mr. Smith for their terrific performance. They are special people and we are very grateful for their help.

Sincerely,
A.P. Ames
Menlo Park



A special "thank you" for the fine job Caltrans is doing to keep southwest California clean, especially in the greater Riverside-Temecula area. Our revenue is partially dependent on tourism generating dollars to our community. Your job is important to tourists getting a first impression of the beauty of our area.

With the new bill signed by the Governor - "Don't Trash California," the public will be aware of keeping this state as a sparkling jewel.

"Thank you" for your immediate attention and concern when (we) called about the 79 south area. You're appreciated.

Truly,
Walt and Betty Karolak

Two years ago, I returned to Lake Arrowhead, having lived for seven years in Valley Forge, PA. I am so impressed with your crews in San Bernardino County given the enormous challenges they have faced due to the fires and mudslides.

They are simply amazing.

Our experience with roads in Pennsylvania was horrid. I never realized how good you are at your jobs until I lived outside the state.

Please forward this on to the appropriate staff so they will know how much they are appreciated by this mountain resident.

Sincerely,
Linda Bonn

I just wanted to compliment you on the new "Hats Off" column. What a great idea and an inspiration during these very difficult times! Congratulations!

Sue Travis
Division of Human Resources

Caltrans Engineer to Climb Mt. Shasta for Liver Research

Suzanne McNaughton, a Caltrans Transportation Engineer (Civil), will spend the weekend of June 19-20 climbing northern California's Mt. Shasta in memory her former companion, Edgar



R. Hernandez.

Hernandez, a former engineer in Program / Project Resource Management at Farmers Market, died in 2002 while awaiting a liver transplant made necessary after he had contracted Hepatitis C.

McNaughton hopes to raise funds for liver research while pursuing her long-time dream of climbing the 14,162-foot mountain, the second-highest volcano in the United States.

"I'll be doing something in memory of Edgar," she said. "I'll be raising money for research in the disease that took his life. And I'll reach the goal I've had for many years: climbing Mt. Shasta."

Since the death of her life partner, McNaughton has been working with the American Liver Foundation (ALF), which strives to prevent, treat and cure hepatitis and other liver diseases through research, education and advocacy.

The foundation notes that liver disease can affect anyone, of any age, and estimates that more than 100 varieties of liver disease affect as much as 10 percent of all Americans.

The Hepatitis C virus is spread through blood-to-blood contact and can cause cirrhosis and cancer of the liver, and even death. There is no vaccine available, although treatment can slow and even stop the disease in some patients. More than 600,000 Californians are infected with the virus, and 3,956 are awaiting a liver transplant.

McNaughton says she hopes to raise at least \$2,000 for the ALF by May 21, which would have been Hernandez's 51st birthday. Donors should make checks payable to the American Liver Foundation, c/o Suzanne McNaughton, California Department of Transportation, 5900 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95819-4612, or through interoffice mail at MS #5. The foundation's tax-identification number is 36-288300.

Exams Schedule

The Caltrans Examination Office anticipates that the following examination bulletins will have a Final Filing date in April/May:

Transportation Engineering Technician (Promo)

The following examinations allow for continuous filing:

Caltrans Heavy Equipment Mechanic (Promo)

Deputy Attorney III (Promo)

Deputy Attorney IV (Promo)

The following examinations allow for continuous filing on the Internet:

Senior Environmental Planner (Promo)

Senior Right of Way Agent (Promo)

Senior Transportation Engineer, Caltrans (Promo)

Visit our Web site at www.dot.ca.gov/hq/jobs for open, promotional, CEA and MSDP examinations.

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emergency, Harden said he had never before seen such a life-threatening situation on a highway. Still, he felt compelled to help.

"When I think about how serious this situation was for this lady, I can only think of my own family and how I would want someone to help them too," Bevan said. "It's routine for us to move stranded vehicles off the roadway to keep traffic moving. But I've never seen someone so close to disaster as this lady."

Laub added that he was glad he was at the right place at the right time.

And Loeb, who had 26 years of law enforcement experience, saluted the bravery and quick thinking of the Caltrans workers. "I am immensely impressed with the professionalism of these Caltrans employees. Saving a person from death is the noblest act."

CT News is a Production of the Caltrans External Affairs Division

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Office of Audio/Visual Communications

DO YOU HAVE A SUGGESTION ON HOW TO IMPROVE STATE OPERATIONS? IF SO, YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR AN AWARD! CONTACT THE EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM AT (916) 227-9803 OR VISIT THE WEB SITE AT:

<http://admin.dot.ca.gov/hr/recognition/index/shtml>